

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

In the Office Action, dated February 12, 2004, claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1-9 recite allowable subject matter.

Summary of Response to the Office Action

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 in accordance with the Examiner's comment, and has amended dependent claims 3 and 4 in order to further clarify the subject matter. In addition, Applicant has added new claims 10-26. Accordingly, claims 1-26 are presently pending.

The Rejections of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In accordance with Examiner's suggestion, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to recite, "a density value detection part that detects a density value of a predetermined color component of image data to which an additional data is to be added; a pattern decision part that decides a pattern having an area corresponding to the density value detected by the density value detection part and having a shape corresponding to the additional data to be added to the image data; and a pattern superimposing part that superimposes the pattern decided by the pattern decision part on the image data." In addition, Applicant has amended dependent claim 3

to recite in part, “wherein the area of a pattern having a shape corresponding to the value of additional data is changed by the area changing part when the pattern decision part makes a decision”, and amended dependent claim 4 to recite in part, “ wherein the pattern decision part decides a wider pattern is to be added when the density value detection part detects that the predetermined color component has a higher density value than a threshold value.” Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments to claims 1, 3, and 4 do not narrow the intended scope of the claims, and therefore, Applicant does not intend to relinquish any subject matter by these amendments. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 and dependent claims 3 and 4, as amended, fully comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 2-9 are allowable for all of the reasons discussed above with regard to amended independent claim 1 from which they respectfully depend, as well as the individual features each of dependent claims 2-9 recite.

New Claims 10-26

Applicant has added new claims 10-26. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 10-26 recite method claims of the present invention. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests consideration of newly added claims 10-26.

Allowed Subject Matter

Applicant does not acquiesce that patentability resides in any single feature, exactly as expressed in the claims or as described in the specification, or that each and every feature of a claim is required for patentability. Furthermore, Applicant does not acquiesce that the description of features in the claims, given in the stated reasons for allowance, is necessarily accurate with respect to the features recited in the allowed claims.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §119

The Office Action states that the certified copy of the priority document has not been received. However, the certified copy of the priority document was filed on November 8, 2000. A copy of the cover sheet of the priority document and the filed stamped post card indicating it was received at the U.S. Patent Office is attached to this response. Applicant respectfully requests acknowledgement of receipt of the certified copy be forthcoming in the next Office Action.

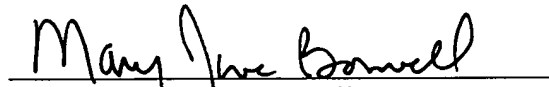
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of all rejections, and the timely allowance of all pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.R.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mary Jane Boswell", is written over a horizontal line.

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Dated: June 10, 2004

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